Airplane Duelling Promises Supreme Thrill in Combats of Honor

Impending Battle of French Aviators Recalls Duellists Who Fought in Balloons With Blunderbusses

By RUSSELL D. OWEN.

MARK TWAIN in his celebrated account of a duel in which he acted as second, thought when he proposed axes or gatling guns at forty paces that he was suggesting means by which a reflection on a gentleman's honor might be most thoroughly effaced. His disgust was great when there was substituted pistols, one of which he hung on his watch chain, and he remarked that when he fell, crushed beneath his fainting principal, he acquired the distinction of having been the first man injured in a French duel in forty years.

But when two French aviators, Capt. Leon Vandecrane and Capt. Robert Schreeber, recently proposed a duel in the air with machine guns as the best way of settling their dispute, they lifted the personal combat to a plane reached not even by the imaginative Twain. In the four years of war every one has become accustomed to reading of battles in the air which staggered the mind, but the thought of two men deliberately going out to duel three miles above the earth has in it something of detached horror. The most roistering bully who ever spitted his opponent in the Bois de Boulogne might well hesitate at the idea of such an encounter.

"Aces" in War Time Duels.

Occasionally in the war champions of each side went hunting each other because of the other's personal renown, but usually they circled warily about, curtsied in mutual respect and went on their way. Col. Bishop, the Canadian ace, tells of a time when he and a German found themselves rushing toward each other at a combined speed of 300 miles an hour, their guns spitting lead in steady bursts, each waiting to see which would weaken first and dodge. The German's nerve cracked and he lifted his machine a fraction of a second before a collision would have been inevitable.

This, however, was an impersonal affair, and two infuriated men using recklessly this weapon of scientific destruction for their opponent's annihilation might very easily be tainted into charging each other if their gunnery and combat skill failed them. Similar ends were not at all uncommon in the days when men frequently fired pistols with only the width of a table between them. Master duellists have had a contempt for death that verges on the sublime.

This airplane duel has been postponed until the end of the war after various objections had been raised against it. Despite his love for deeds of spectacular bravery the Parisian contemplated with some reluctance the possibility of a defeated duellist tumbling out of the clouds onto his chimney pots, and the police forbade the affair near the city. Then a combat over the sea was suggested, but as France is still at war the seconds decided that it would be best to postpone the meeting until the peace treaty is signed. So it is to be hoped that the principals will cool off before they have an opportunity to fight.

Duellists in Balloons.

Only one battle in the air is recorded in all the long history of duelling, and that, appropriately enough, was also held over Paris. Balloons and blunderbusses were used. A. M. de Grandpree and a M. le Pique had a dispute over a dancer, which resulted in a challenge. Being, as the chronicler puts it, of "elevated minds," the gentlemen decided on balloons. So on May 3, 1808, they went to a field near the Tuileries and climbed into their baskets. In this case the seconds apparently had implicit confidence in the prowess of their principals, for they also got into the balloons. In the airplane duel, the seconds propose to have the comparative safety of their own machines.

A good part of Paris was on hand to see this unique affair, although they did not know the purpose of the ascension. Outwardly it was a friendly party. The cords were cut and the big bags sailed up in the air, and as the wind was moderate kept about eighty yards apart.

At the height of 800 yards M. de Pique fired and missed. The fire was immediately returned by his opponent and M. le Pique's balloon was perforated with slugs. Down it went and M. le Pique and his second were dashed to pieces on a housetop, while Grandpree and his second sailed on until they had put seven leagues between themselves and Paris.

Novel Methods in Fighting.

Despite the many edicts against duelling and the almost constant efforts to repress it there were times in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when men of fashion rarely met without asking who had been "out" the day before. The sword and the pistol were the usual weapons, sometimes both were used at one time, but circumstances or the desire for originality frequently led to curious combats.

Men fought in dark rooms or were tied together, sometimes they held their left hand, leaving the right free to wield a poinard, spikes were fixed on a helmet and used for butting, and there are even recorded duels between women, and a strange battle between a man and a dog—a case of the old trial by combat.

So far as is known the remarkable triangular duel of Mr. Midshipman Easy, laid out with scientific exactness by the ship's gunner, and in which the purser's steward was shot in the "seat of honor" and the bo'sun through the mouth so he couldn't whistle, is unique fiction, but when Joseph Conrad wrote a story called "The Duel" he took his material from a famous duel between two French officers which lasted nineteen years.

It began in Strasbourg in 1787. A Captain of Hussars, named Fournier, who was a desperate duellist, had challenged, on a frivolous pretence, and killed a young man. There was a ball soon after at the quarters of Gen. Moreau and the General, fearing that the presence of Fournier might be offensive, told his aide-de-camp, Capt. Dupont, to prevent Fournier from entering. This Dupont attempted to do and was challenged by Fournier, who was wounded.

"That's the first bout," he said, as he sank on the ground.

"Then you wish for another, do you?" asked Dupont.

"Most assuredly, my brave fellow," was the reply.

They fought again and this time Dupont was wounded, whereupon he exclaimed, "That's the second. As soon as possible again and then for the finish."

They Draw Up a Treaty.

Fournier was a crack shot, and so Dupont refused the suggestion that they use pistols. They fought again with swords without either being satisfied, and then resolved to continue until one should confess himself beaten or satisfied. So they drew up the following treaty:

"Every time that Dupont and Fournier shall be a hundred miles from each other they will each approach half the distance to meet sword in hand.

"Should one of the contracting parties be prevented by the duties of the service, he who is free must go the entire distance, so as to reconcile the duties of the service with the exigencies of the present treaty.

"No excuse whatever excepting those resulting from military obligations will be admitted."

They found no difficulty in meeting, and did so with the eagerness of lovers. "They never crossed swords without shaking hands in the most boisterous manner," says the chronicler. Their invitations were delightful burlesque.

"I am invited to breakfast with the officers of the regiment of Chasseurs at Suneville," wrote one. "I hope to be able to accept this pleasant invitation. As you are on leave in that town we will take advantage of the opportunity, if you please, to get a thrust at each other." And another:

"My Dear Friend—I shall be at Strasbourg on the 5th of November, proximo, about noon. Wait for me at the Hotel des Postes. We shall have a thrust or two."

Promotions Caused Delays.

Occasionally one of them was promoted, and the other had to wait until his own advance in rank. They became in time Generals, grayhaired and dignified, but still approached each other with the ardor of youth. Finally Dupont thought of marrying, but felt that he could not do so until he had either killed Fournier or placed him in a position where he would be no longer dangerous. So he proposed the pistol.

"Why, man, you are mad," exclaimed the expert marksman, Fournier, probably little relishing the idea of being deprived of his opponent by his death.

But Dupont had thought of a plan to nullify the other's advantage. He proposed that they go into a wood near Neuilly, each with a pair of horse pistols, and track each other, firing at convenience. Having separated they crept about, trying to get a glimpse of each other through the trees, and finally both came into full view. They dropped to the ground and thought it over.

Dupont knew that to stir was certain death, so he raised the flap of his coat, and one of Fournier's bullets went through it. After a time he held his pistol out on the other side of the tree with his left hand, and poked out his cap with his right. Bang went a bullet through the cap.

Dupont Wins and Weds.

Dupont, having won by strategy, went over to Fournier, and informed him that having won his life he made it a condition if Fournier wished to continue on earth, that he never cross Dupont's path again. So Dupont was married and the longest duel on record passed into history until Mr. Conrad saw in it material for one of his best known short stories.

Ever since the days of David and Goliath there have been isolated duels in history, the earliest being of the nature of the old trial by combat. It was not until knighthood made fighting fashionable that the modern duel became common. It was trial by combat which gave rise to the strange battle between a dog and the Chevalier Maquer in the sight of all Paris early in the fifteenth century.

The master of the dog, Aubrey Mondidier, was murdered and buried beneath a tree. Soon afterward the dog met the murderer of his master, Maquer, and attacked him with great ferocity to the amazement of the spectators. It was remembered that Maquer had at times shown a violent enmity toward Mondidier, and when the King heard of it he ordered the dog and Maquer brought before him. The dog fawned on everyone else, but attacked Maquer savagely. King Charles determined that this necessitated trial by combat and he appointed the time and the place.

Dog Becomes Victor.

Maquer entered the list armed only with his lance, and the dog immediately made a savage rush at him. Maquer parried him for a time, unable to spear him with the lance, and then the dog broke past his guard, seized Maquer by the throat and bore him to the ground. The man then confessed and King Charles ordered that a marble monument with an inscription be erected to the dog in the forest where the murder occurred.

The gentle habit of lighting a fire and building a gallows over it was usual in the early days of jousting, as a reminder to one's opponent that he would be run through, then hung and later burned. Both knights were first required to sit in seats of black in which they swore that they would not have recourse to sorcery, witchcraft or incantations to gain the advantage. One of these famous duels was that between Baron des Guerres and Seigneur de Fandilles in the reign of Henry the Second.

There was a merry gathering of the ladies and gentlemen of the court to watch the settlement of the dispute. The Baron was armed with a peculiar sword called "epee batarde," the use of which had been taught hm by a warlike priest. But Fandilles ran his sword through the Baron's thigh, and then throwing away their swords they began to wrestle, in which the Baron was also proficient, instruction having been given him by another priest, a chaplain of militant tastes.

Grand Stand Collapses.

In the midst of their setto the scaffolding on which the ladies of the court were seated gave way, and they piled up in a heap of broken timbers and limbs, screaming for help. No one was supposed to utter a word at one of these bouts, but the friends of the Baron profited by the disturbance to yell advice to him.

"Throw sand in his eyes and mouth," they cried; "sand in his eyes and mouth." Which the worthy Baron proceeded to do and won the combat, although it was a much disputed point later whether this was not a little unknightly and unfair.

In these days also is recorded the fight between two Corsicans who fixed sharp pointed daggers in front of their helmets. Both were armed with swords and when they found neither could gain a decision with these weapons, they began to wrestle and butt each other with the daggers, with the result that one died and the other nearly perished.

A clever French soldier used a somewhat similar device when he was challenged by a big Gascon. He insisted that they should both wear steel collars in which were fixed a number of pointed blades pointing upward and no armor. When the fight started the little man was safe from the big fellow's daggers, but the big man found that whenever he tried to come to close quarters he was nearly impaled on one of the daggers. The little man won speedily by running his enemy through.

The Cut of Jarnac.

In the time of Henry II. of France occurred one of the most famous of duels, between Chataigneraye and the renowned Jarnac, favorites of the King. Jarnac availed himself in a remarkable way of the right to choose the weapons, making Chataigneraye provide himself with thirty sorts of arms and many different breeds of horses, so that he would have been ruined if the King had not aided him.

The duel took place at Saint-Germain in the presence of the whole court, and Jarnac improvised a new cut by which he hamstrung his opponent. Furious at his defeat Chataigneraye refused the services of a surgeon and died. This stroke was afterward called "The Cut of Jarnac."

Duelling soon after became very common, and was made odious by some of the deceits used to bring about the downfall of an opponent. There is told of one knight that he had always been trained to strike accurately at the heart, and the result was that he always insisted on his opponent fighting in armor that had a hole over the heart. Oddly enough he always won.

The swords were also tampered with and armorers became expert in tempering them so that they would snap in the hands of an inexperienced swordsman, but to one who knew their use they were as good as any Toledo blade.

4,000 Killed in Duels.

During the reign of Henry the Fourth 4,000 men lost their lives by duelling, and Henry granted 14,000 pardons for breaking the laws against duelling. Nothing served to stop it, and it was hard to find a man who had not killed some one in a duel.

The women so flattered famous duellists with their attentions that it was esteemed the highest fame to which a man could aspire to have a number of notches in his sword grip. They were the rage, with some intermission, until the time of the Restoration in France, and even in England, in the time of Charles, they were so common that he called them "a kind of emblem of the complexion of the country."

M. Mennon, a gentleman of France, wished to marry a niece of M. Disancour, who said, it is related, "Ah, but it is not yet time. You must first kill in single combat two or three men; then marry and engender two or three children, and the world will neither have gained nor lost by you." Excellent philosophy.

Even La Fontaine, the writer of fables, a meek and mild gentleman called "the good," was forced on one occasion to go out. There was little of jealousy in his nature, but finally overanxious friends persuaded him that a Captain of dragoons was too familiar with La Fontaine's wife. So he got up one morning with the firm resolve to fight, took his sword and went out to meet the Captain.

"My dear sir, I must fight you, since I am assured that it is absolutely necessary," said the ingenuous soul.

The dragoon promptly disarmed him and then gave him a lecture on the absurdity of his behavior. So far from there being truth in the reports he said that he would never again call at the poet's house, that his honor might be without question. On which La Fontaine became deeply affected, and told the Captain that he must continue his calls, and that if he did not do so he would force him to fight again.

It is related of Cagliostro that when he was called out by a physician he proposed that they battle with poison, using two pills, one of which should be deadly. The pills would be drawn by lot from a box and swallowed as the opponents faced each other. Then they would wait to see what [illegible] That appeared entirely too cold blooded to the physician, who perhaps, as Cagliostro had called him a quack, lacked the scientific detachment of mind necessary to go through with it.

A French Colonel who had boasted in this time that he had never fought a duel because his courage had never been questioned, and no one had ever seen fit to insult him, was promptly challenged by a man who struck him on the cheek.

When they appeared for the meeting the Colonel wore a piece of plaster on his cheek, and after nonchalantly laying his adversary on the turf he took a pair of scissors from his pocket and cut off a bit of the plaster. The next time they met he cut off another piece, and the next time another, until only a little was left. Then he ran his man through and killed him, and remarked, "Now I can take off my plaster."

Mortal Combat in a Coach.

An awful duel which took place in France was that between Col. Barbier-Dufal and a young man named Roual of the Royal Guard. The Colonel was a member of the fallen imperial party and took pleasure in calling out members of the opposition. So he provoked Roual to a fight and then found that the boy was only 18 and had never used any weapon. The Colonel then tried to retire from the combat, but the boy insisted, and was disarmed four times.

The Colonel then declared that he would murder no one, and proposed another weapon. A coach was coming and he suggested that they get in it, each armed with a poinard, and be tied together. The coach was then to be driven twice around the Place de Carrousel and the door opened to [illegible] who was victor.

The coach started off at a gallop and soon two cries were heard and then silence. When the anxious seconds pulled open the door they found a frightful scene. Raoul was dead and the Colonel nearly so, having been stabbed four times. So horrible was this affair that it was kept quiet until 1858, when the Comte de Pontecoulant told of it.

One of the most famous of the modern French duellists was Fayot, who was equally clever with sword or pistol but was never cruel, as he generally pinked his man in the arm or leg. He was a curious person, who dressed in a green coat, white waistcoat and neckcloth, leather pantaloons and Hessian boots, with his hat tipped up on the side, a sort of French William S. Hart.

He was a great upholder of the legitimists and one time at a play hissed when the people cheered mention of Bonaparte. In a moment cards were flying about the pit. Fayot collected them all in his hat and went out. Then he wrote his own name and address on pieces of paper, which contained a promise to be every morning between 11 and 12 at a well near the Bois de Boulogne near Auteuil. One man only appeared to accept the challenge, and Fayot gracefully shot him through the knee.

A German "Victory."

An encounter between Admiral de la Susse and a German is illuminating in view of the knowledge the world has acquired of German sportsmanship. The German won first fire and missed, and when the Admiral fired the German fell. But instead of being killed the German soon got up, for the bullet had been imbedded in a cutlass which he wore. The Admiral contemplated him coolly through his glass for a moment and then deliberately licked him off the field, on which the German, says the story, "walked off the ground as if he had accomplished some wonderful achievement."

There was humor even in duels, and one instance is recorded where it saved a man's life. Perpignan, who was reputed a wit, fought Charles Maurice, an expert shot, at five paces. Perpignan missed, and Maurice before firing said:

"Now, Perpignan, tell me what you are thinking about."

"My dear fellow," he replied, "I am thinking that if I were in your place I would not fire."

Maurice burst into a laugh and threw his pistol away.

Women in Duels.

Strange as it may seem, there are a number of instances of duels between women. But the best known woman [illegible] was [illegible] Maupin, an actress at the opera, who had learned to fence from her lover, Serane, the fencing master. Once at a ball she was requested to leave. She consented to if the three men who championed the woman with whom she had quarrelled would go with her. They did so, and she calmly stretched them on the lawn, one after the other, and then went back to the ball. She was pardoned by Louis XIV.

The Comtesse de Polignac and the Marquise de Neale once fought with pistols because of an unfortunate encounter they had at the Duc de Richelieu's when the latter's secretary got appointments mixed. Before firing the Comtesse called out to her rival, "Fire first, and mind you don't miss me, if you think I am going to miss you." The Marquise did miss, whereupon the Comtesse shot off a piece of her ear, much to the lady's despair.

A Woman's Curious Challenge.

One of the curious challenges preserved in the archives of duelling is that between two women in 1796. It is dated St. J——'s P——, which looks suspiciously like St. James's Palace. It read:

"The Hon. Miss —— cannot longer exist under the public insults she has received from the Hon. Miss ——. *Honorable men* (underscored as befitted an angry woman) demand and receive satisfaction for similar injuries. Why are Maids of Honor to be proscribed on such occasions? My further sentiments will be conveyed to you by Ensign —— of the Coldstream, who is charged with the delivery of this letter."

The answer read:

"Madam—You may give yourself what appellation you please. When the laws of honor declare it right that a gentleman shall meet a notorious *blackleg* I shall think it my duty to obey the summons of a ——! The Ensign who bore your commission is a *creature of fine feelings*, for he would have fainted before he left my apartment but for the timely application of my *eau de luce*."

And that ended that quarrel, for they never spoke again.

In England there are innumerable cases recorded of duels in the sacred environs of Hyde Park, and that it was countenanced by men of unusual intellect as well as good birth is shown when one finds in the list the names of York, Norfolk, Richmond, Bellamont, Exmouth, Talbot, Townshend, Shelbourne, Paget, Castlereagh, Petersham, Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Canning, Tierney and many others. In the reign of George III. 172 duels were fought, in which sixty-nine persons were killed.

Quaint Books of Advice.

This predilection for duelling gave rise to some quaint books of advice to aspiring young men, and one was published as late as 1829 by Joseph Hamilton, an experienced hand with either sword or pistol, in which he tells the proper way affairs of honor should be conducted. Mr. Hamilton had figured out that the chances of being killed in a duel are only 1 to 14. Despite this he admits that one has a natural hesitancy about facing a pistol for the first time.

"I have known persons some months before they could overcome that nervous sensation produced from being fired at," he remarks. "Constant practice, however, will overcome it sooner or later.

"A man should not allow the idea of becoming a target to make him uneasy. That his mind may not dwell on the affair he ought to invite a few friends to dinner and laugh away the evening over a bottle of port, or if fond of cards play a rubber of whist. Should he feel inclined to sleep when he retires to rest and troubled images disturb his imagination let him take some amusing book—one of Sir Walter's novels, if a lover of the romantic, or Byron's 'Childe Harold' if he delights in the sublime—and read until he drops asleep, leaving word with a trusty servant to wake him at 5 and provide a strong cup of coffee, to be taken immediately on arising."

Die Gracefully, He Admonishes.

After telling the best way to dress so that the wound may not become infected and the proper way of standing and holding the pistol he adds:

"If upon the discharge his adversary's ball has taken effect he must not be alarmed or confused, but quietly submit to the examination of his surgeon, who should close round him with his second the moment the discharge has taken place.

"I cannot impress upon an individual too strongly the propriety of remaining perfectly calm and collected when hit; he must not allow himself to be alarmed or confused, but summoning up all his resolution treat the matter coolly, and if he dies go off with as good grace as possible."

Which reminds one of Andrew Jackson's duel with Dickinson. Dickinson, who was a marvellous shot, amused himself by shooting twigs from the trees on the way to the grounds in a vain attempt to crack the iron Jackson nerve. When he fired he aimed at a button on Jackson's coat and struck it fairly, but it happened that it did not reach a fatal spot. Jackson did not show by the movement of a muscle that he had been touched, and when he had badly wounded Dickinson walked off the grounds, enjoining his seconds not to let it be known that he had been hurt.

Mr. Hamilton also has a word to say about swords:

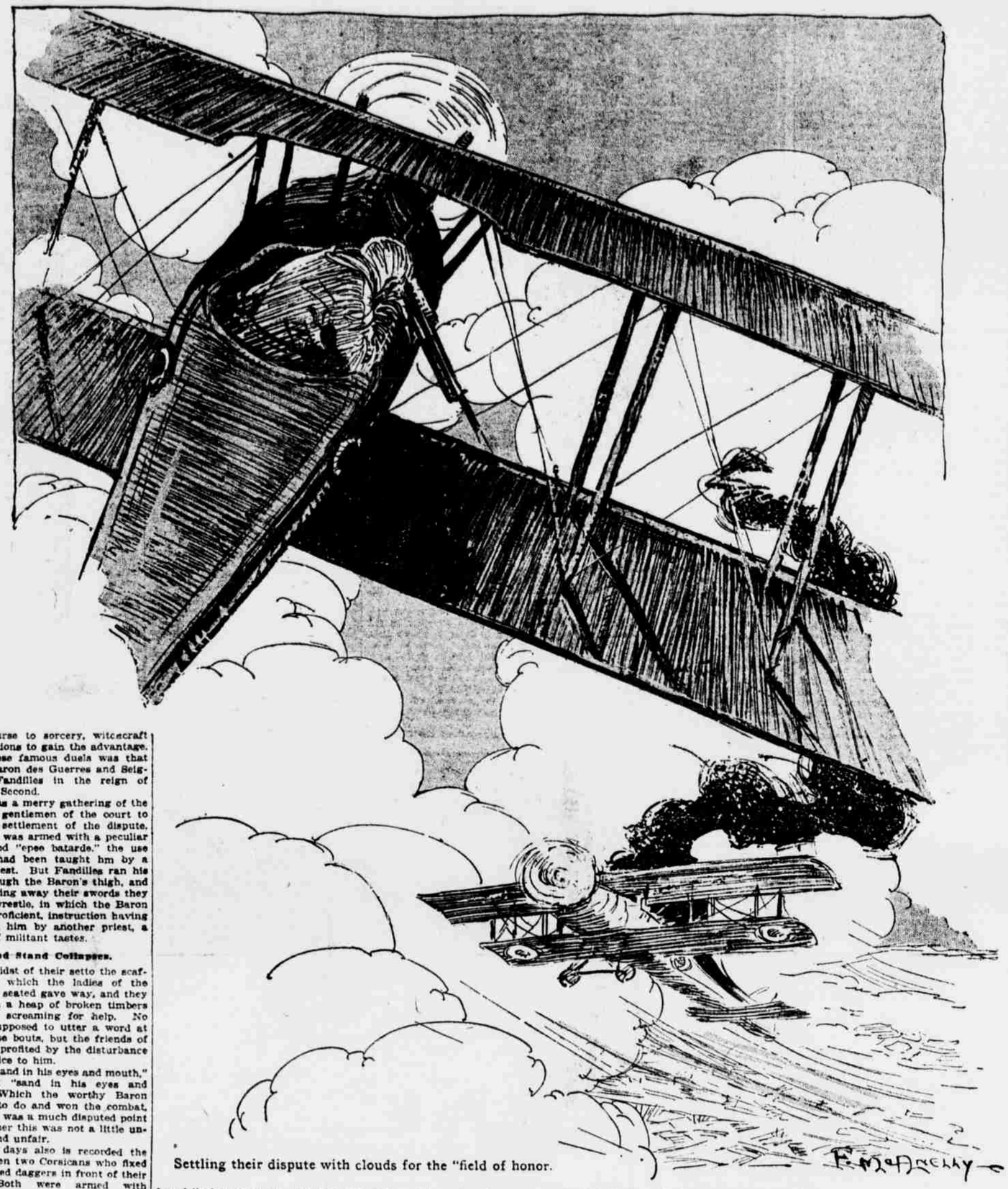
"Do not omit either if you puncture your adversary when engaged to carefully free your sword from any moisture (delicate word) previous to returning it to the scabbard. I had a beautiful Toledo considerably damaged by the carelessness of a friend in this respect. During the confusion that necessarily arises such an accident is very likely to occur."

Duelling in Ireland.

Before the Union Ireland was the garden spot of the duellists. Tipperary and Galway were looked up to as the universities of this gentleman's sport, Galway turned out the best swords, but Tipperary excelled in pistols. That the advantage of the duel might not be abused because of its prevalence three earnest souls, "Crow" Ryan, James Keogh and "Amby" Bodkin, got together and drew up laws to govern procedure. They were called the "Thirty-six Commandments of Galway" and were headed:

"The practice of duelling and points of honor settled at Clonmel Summer Assizes, 1777, by the gentlemen delegates of Tipperary, Galway, Mayo, Sligo and Roscommon and prescribed for general adoption throughout Ireland."

Every respectable family had its own set of pistols, handed down from generation to generation and tended with affectionate care by the household, and on every stock were a number of suggestive cuts, each with a story no doubt. If one returned from an encounter without wounding or being wounded it depressed the whole family for days.



Settling their dispute with clouds for the "field of honor."

Head Hunters Who Wear Psyche Knots

PICTURE a man whose long hair is done up in a Psyche knot, with a bandeau of beads around his head; then add to this the heavy features, full beard, and mustache of a swarthy barbarian, and one has some idea of the appearance of a warrior type of the northern part of the Island of Luzon.

These men pertain to the fierce tribes of head-hunters, and their elaborate dressing of the hair, which in civilized countries is considered a purely feminine vanity, seems grotesquely incongruous with their savage pursuits. Not being obliged to waste any time on their wardrobes, since clothing is practically unknown, all their efforts toward adornment are devoted to the head and are much more elaborate than those of the women.

The dandy of the Kalinga tribe bangs his hair heavily over the forehead, training it so that it has almost the effect of a low pompadour. Above this is built a structure of feathers and flowers, the latter branching out and drooping quite artistically over each side.

At the back his hair is arranged to hang long and flowing or is put up in a chignon. His ears have enormous holes in which are plugs of wood fancifully carved. Sometimes many strings of beads are about the neck and the face and chest are tattooed, but the main efforts at adornment are directed to the hair.

A little cap woven of bamboo, about the size of the "pill box" of Tommy Atkins, is often worn on the back of the head to cover the coil of the hair. Boudoir caps trimmed with pink ribbons have not yet penetrated to the interior of Luzon; but if they ever do, it is safe to say that they immediately will be appropriated by these warriors to the entire exclusion of the feminine contingent.

The wearing of false hair is allowed the women. These additional locks are in every case the hair of their ancestors. A wife of a Kalinga chief is described as wearing quite a towering superstructure of false hair surmounted by flowers and feathers. Around her neck are many strings of large, rough agate beads.

Agate is highly prized among these people, and the larger and rougher in surface the better. A string of such beads holds, in comparison, something of the same value as the rope of pearls of the society dame. The Kalinga woman of the beads held the rank of queen among her people; hence her right to the necklace and the abundance of false hair.

Duels Famed in History Include One Lasting Nineteen Years and Several in Which Women Figured as Principals